

<p style="text-align: center;">AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT FORENSIC SCIENCE DIVISION CRIME SCENE SECTION</p>
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1 SCOPE OF OPERATIONS

1.1 Crime Scene Section Overview

The Crime Scene Section will follow the guidelines set forth in the Forensic Science Division Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Manual. Supplemental requirements specific to the Crime Scene Section are contained within the Crime Scene Section SOP, the Crime Scene Section Technical Manual, and the Crime Scene Section Training Manual. These manuals combined include guidelines for the Quality System within the Crime Scene Section laboratory.

This document specifies procedures and analyses relating to the recognition, documentation, collection, processing and preservation of evidence from both crime scene investigations and requests from law enforcement entities. Within the scope of that purpose, it is intended to ensure effective and efficient use of both the laboratory facilities and all equipment used during field investigations for the benefit of law enforcement entities and with the ultimate goal of detection, solution, and prevention of crime.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise or to prescribe a specific course of action for every case. The analyst must exercise good judgment based on experience and common sense, especially when processing evidence. In some cases, the manual offers guidelines for analysis that must be tempered with the experience of the analyst. However, any portion of a procedure not explicitly qualified as a guideline, e.g., by the use of the word “should”, may not be modified for use in casework without prior approval by the Technical Leader or supervisor.

1.2 History of the Crime Scene Section

The Identification Section of the Austin Police Department originated in 1924. One unit of the Identification Section became the Crime Scene Unit. The Crime Scene Unit was created to provide assistance to officers at crime scenes in the collection, processing and preservation of evidence; providing for the secure and safe storage of evidence and processing evidence for latent prints in a laboratory setting. Property Crime Technicians were added in 1999 to assist in the response to property crime calls by taking reports from citizens and processing crime scenes for evidence, lessening the need for officer response. The Crime Scene Unit became the Crime Scene Section in 2004.

1.3 Mission Statement

No Supplemental Requirements

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1.4 Goals and Objectives

No Supplemental Requirements

1.5 Code of Ethics

No Supplemental Requirements

1.6 Organization and Staffing

No Supplemental Requirements

1.7 List of Locations, Addresses and Phone Numbers

No Supplemental Requirements

1.8 Organizational Chart

No Supplemental Requirements

1.9 Section Descriptions and Responsibilities

No Supplemental Requirements

1.10 Hours of Operation

- The Crime Scene Section maintains 24 hour coverage every day for major crime scenes. The coverage is divided into the following three shifts:
 - Day shift: 0600 to 1400 hours
 - Evening shift: 1400 to 2200 hours
 - Night shift: 2200 to 0600 hours
- Section employees rotate days off every 28 days. Management will attempt to maintain a shift rotation that covers a six month period. Switching or trading of work hours between employees is not permitted. Management may alter shift schedules depending on the needs of the section.
- Shift preference will be determined by seniority. A shift bid roster will be passed around in order of seniority and each employee will select a preferred open slot. The following criteria will be used in descending order to determine seniority in the Crime Scene Section:

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- Time in current position/promotion start date.
 - Previous position/promotion start date.
 - Employment start date with Forensics Science Division per Human Resources date/time stamp on employee's application.
 - Employments start date with the City of Austin.
 - Banner number by ascending order (smallest number equals highest seniority).
- Seniority criteria for shift assignments apply only to personnel employed in the Crime Scene Section for one year or more. Shift assignments for personnel employed in the Crime Scene Section for less than one year may be determined by management discretion. Additionally, management may make exceptions to the above seniority list depending on the needs of the section. Previous position/promotion start dates prior to an employee's last two positions are not used as criteria for seniority.
 - A callback roster is utilized for the availability of additional personnel on major crime scenes or as necessary as determined by a supervisor. In the event that additional personnel are needed beyond the initial call out, those personnel will be contacted via pager and advised to respond for assignment. During bad weather episodes as deemed by the city manager, all essential personnel scheduled to be on duty must report to work regardless of their current work assignment (e.g., training, laboratory duty, court, etc.).
 - Crime Scene Supervisors
 - A Crime Scene Supervisor is assigned to each shift and one supervisor is responsible for the Quality Assurance of the Section and the Crime Scene Laboratory. The supervisors rotate days off every 28 days. One supervisor is on call 24 hours a day, for one week, rotating every four weeks.
 - Crime Scene Specialists
 - Four Crime Scene Specialists are assigned to each eight-hour shift. One Crime Scene Specialist is assigned to a day shift in the laboratory. In addition to working a scheduled shift, one Crime Scene Specialist is on call for a rotating one-week period in the event additional personnel are needed. On-call personnel have a maximum of one hour to respond to the scene when not on duty. Callback must be approved by a supervisor prior to response.

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- **Property Crime Technicians**
 - Seven Property Crime Technicians are assigned to the day shift and seven are assigned to the evening shift. There is no established on-call schedule for Property Crime Technicians; however, supervisors can initiate a page to the technicians for assistance, depending on the needs of the section.

1.11 Manuals

No Supplemental Requirements

1.12 Customer Service

No Supplemental Requirements

1.13 Management System

- **Crime Scene Supervisor**
 - The Crime Scene Supervisor is responsible for coordinating and supervising the daily activities of personnel within the Crime Scene Section (CS), to include the processing of evidence, ordering of supplies and equipment, and maintaining the CS Laboratory. Supervisors are responsible for responding to major crime scene investigations, as needed, and are responsible for assuming supervisory control of CS personnel, making decisions on the processing of the crime scene, providing liaison between CS personnel and investigators/communications/officers, ensuring the safety and security of CS personnel and evidence while processing the scene, ensuring CS personnel use appropriate personal protective equipment, ensuring that sufficient supplies, equipment, and personnel are available, including any additional personnel needed for secondary crime scenes or assignments, notifying the chain of command, and providing periodic updates as needed.
- **Senior Crime Scene Specialist**
 - Senior Crime Scene Specialists work under the direction of a Crime Scene Supervisor. They respond to major crime scenes, following standardized principles, practices, and procedures in the evaluation, documentation, collection, preservation, processing, and/or handling of evidence at/from major crime scenes. Senior Crime Scene Specialists are also responsible for completing a professional report and providing expert testimony in court. Other assigned duties may include processing of pending laboratory requests, peer review of reports, and the coordination and communication of shift activities during

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supervisor absence. They are expected to provide training, guidance, and technical support to section personnel.

- Sr. Crime Scene Specialists acquire this designation through the Division Progression Plan.

- **Crime Scene Specialist**

- Crime Scene Specialists work under the direction of a Crime Scene Supervisor. They respond to major crime scenes, following standardized principles, practices, and procedures in the evaluation, documentation, collection, preservation, processing, and/or handling of evidence at/from major crime scenes. Crime Scene Specialists are responsible for completing a professional report and providing expert testimony in court. Other assigned duties may include processing of pending laboratory requests, peer review of reports, and other duties as needed. Crime Scene Specialists are also responsible for the coordination and communication of shift activities in the absence of a supervisor or Senior Crime Scene Specialist.

- **Senior Property Crime Technician**

- Senior Property Crime Technicians work under the direction of a Crime Scene Supervisor. They respond to property crime scenes, following standardized principles, practices, and procedures in the evaluation, documentation, collection, preservation, processing, and/or handling of evidence at/from property crime scenes. Senior Property Crime Technicians are also responsible for completing a professional analysis report and providing expert testimony in court. Other assigned duties may include processing of pending laboratory requests, administrative peer review of reports, and other duties as needed. Senior Property Crime Technicians must complete and maintain the required certification as mandated in the job description.
- They are not responsible for handling all property crime calls within the city. Patrol officers are still responsible for responding to calls that cannot be handled in a timely manner by section personnel. Senior Property Crime Technicians are not to be utilized as an evidence transport unit for the Department. Only evidence requiring forensic examination and or fingerprint processing should be transported.
- Sr. Specialists acquire this designation through the Division Progression Plan.

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- **Property Crime Technician**

- Property Crime Technicians work under the direction of a Crime Scene Section Supervisor. They respond to property crime scenes, following standardized principles, practices, and procedures in the evaluation, documentation, collection, preservation, processing, and/or handling of evidence at/from property crime scenes. Property Crime Technicians are also responsible for completing a professional analysis report and to providing expert testimony in court. Other assigned duties may include processing of pending laboratory requests, administrative peer review of reports, and other duties as needed.
- They are not responsible for handling all property crime calls within the city. Patrol officers are still responsible for responding to calls that cannot be handled in a timely manner by section personnel. Property Crime Technicians are not to be utilized as an evidence transport unit for the Department. Only evidence requiring forensic examination and or fingerprint processing should be transported.

1.14 Planning and Development

- **Statistical Information and Reports**

- Statistical reports are utilized to assist in tracking workload, predicting increases in workflow, and preparing staffing or budget analysis. Each section employee is responsible for documenting their daily activity for the purposes of statistical analysis. Supervisors or designees are responsible for ensuring that the information is being documented.
- Acceptable Reporting Methods
 - LIMS CS – Crime Scene Investigation Information panel
 - LIMS CSL – Crime Scene Laboratory Information panel
 - LIMS Activity Log (on main page)
 - Crime Scene Section Daily Worksheet
- Responsibilities
 - Employees' Responsibilities
 - Employees will document their daily activity utilizing the LIMS CS/CSL Information Panels, LIMS Activity Log and the Crime Scene Section Daily Worksheet, as required. This applies whether the employee is working a full shift, a partial shift, or attending court on a scheduled day off.
 - Employees will ensure all applicable fields are complete and accurate and that all non-analysis/assignment activities are documented as soon as practical.
 - The statistical information regarding assignments, specifically the Daily

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Worksheet, should be completed by the end of the shift and routed to the appropriate Supervisor for review.

➤ Procedures

- LIMS CS – Crime Scene Investigation Information panel is located in the Report Writing section of each LIMS CS assignment. This panel will be used to document analysis activities performed and statistical information related to a specific field case.
- The following are the call codes denoted in the “Scene Type” section for each LIMS CS field assignment:
 - Field Call: Used on all calls for service in which non-laboratory work product is initiated or expected. This would include collecting a sample from a suspect at the jail, responding to the Main to collect clothing from a detective, etc.
 - Canceled: Used after responding to calls for service for at least five minutes and then canceled or preempted.
 - Morgue Call: Used to account for time attending actual autopsies. The “Photo Only” code should not be used.
 - No Action Call: Used after arriving on scene and determining that no crime scene processing is needed.
 - Photos Only Call: Used on those calls for service in which only photography/video documentation is completed. No processing is performed and no items of evidence are collected. An example would be photos of victim injuries with no further action taken.
 - Others: Used to account for time spent related to a specific offense number performing Crime Scene duties not listed above.
- The remaining sections of the Investigation Information panel will be completed for each LIMS CS field assignment worked.
 - “Additional Minutes” – will be determined as the amount of time required to fully complete an assignment after departing the scene, including packaging, data entry, submission and report writing.
 - “# Items Collected” – will be determined as those items packaged separately, including items later separated before submission to the CEL.
- LIMS CSL – Crime Scene Laboratory Information panel is located in the Report Writing section of each LIMS CSL assignment. This panel will be used to document analysis activities performed and statistical information related to a specific lab case.

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- “Total Time” – determined as the amount of time required to fully complete a lab assignment, including all analysis, packaging and report writing. Time will be denoted in minutes only (not hours).
- “# Items Processed for DNA” – determined as those items that required sample(s) be collected for a DNA Lab Request.
- “# Items Processed for LP” – determined as those items that are actually processed for latent prints. One pistol (e.g. with ten rounds and a magazine) to be processed will equal twelve items.
- “# of Friction Ridge Photos” – determined as those photos that will be transferred to a CD for Latent Print Section comparisons.
- “# Latent Cards” – will include all friction ridge lifts and casts.
- “# Photo only items” – determined as non-friction ridge items that are photographed in the lab, (i.e., damage to clothing, stains, etc.)
- LIMS Activity Log: The call codes for the LIMS Activity Log must be used for any non-analysis type of assignment performed by employees of the Forensic Division. The following are the Activity Codes and descriptions to be used by the Crime Scene Section as needed:
 - COURT: Used for pretrial meetings and court testimony.
 - CSVIN: Crime Scene Daily Vehicle Inspection
 - MAINT: Used for vehicle repair, calibration of equipment, preventative maintenance type duties.
 - PRACT: Used for public relations activities, such as lectures, tours, science fairs, community groups, etc.
 - PRES: Used for training given as an instructor or presenter.
 - TRAIN: Used when training is received as a student.
- Crime Scene Section Daily Worksheet will be used to document and summarize daily activities of field personnel. The employee will total the number of Field, Lab, Report, and Miscellaneous cases worked during their shift on each day in the appropriate box under “Number of Cases Worked”. Additionally, the following information will be documented daily on this worksheet:
 - CODE:
 - a. “F”: Field – any field crime scene call including morgue, photo only, no action, and cancelled
 - b. “L”: Lab – any casework performed in the laboratory

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- c. "R": Report – report written on field or lab work
- d. "M": Miscellaneous – any Crime Scene duties/activities not listed above
 - ACTIVITY:
 - a. The title of offense or description of duty/activity performed
 - LIMS and/or CASE#:
 - a. The LIMS and/or case number related to field or lab work
 - TIME USED:
 - a. The total amount of time used to work on a certain case or duty/activity

1.15 Purchasing Supplies and Services

No Supplemental Requirements

1.16 Management Review System

No Supplemental Requirements

1.17 Equipment and Supply Inventory

- The Crime Scene (CS) Section has one person assigned to the Crime Scene Laboratory. This person is responsible for ensuring that proper supplies are available in the laboratory. Even though this person is primarily responsible for these functions, it is the responsibility of every employee to report inadequate supplies and inventories to the Crime Scene Supervisors.
 - Chemical Supplies
 - It is the responsibility of the supervisors to ensure that a monthly chemical inventory is conducted to ensure that an adequate supply is maintained.
 - The person conducting the inventory will forward the results of the inventory to a supervisor.
 - Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that purchase requests are prepared and chemicals are re-stocked in a timely manner.
 - Laboratory and Field Supplies
 - It is the responsibility of the supervisors to ensure that a monthly supply inventory is conducted to ensure that an adequate supply is maintained.
 - The person conducting the inventory will forward the results of the inventory to a supervisor.

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- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that purchase requests are prepared and supplies are re-stocked in a timely manner.
- It is the responsibility of section staff to ensure that the lab and vehicles are properly stocked to perform the functions assigned to the section. If an employee observes that reserves of supplies are exhausted, it is their responsibility to notify a supervisor.

2 FACILITY DESIGN AND SECURITY

2.1 Physical Plant/Space and Design

No Supplemental Requirements

2.2 Security

- The section maintains the following storage locations within the Crime Scene Laboratory (ASCLD/LAB 5.3.4.1.f and ASCLD/LAB 5.8.4.2):
- **In-Process Storage**
 - **Temporary Storage Cabinets**
 - Two Evidence Storage Rooms (or Vault) are located in the operational area of the section. One room contains individually secured evidence cabinets with keys. A key will be kept in each lock when not in use. When an item of evidence is placed in an evidence cabinet, the employee will remove the key and maintain custody of the key until the evidence is removed. The key will then be placed back in the lock for future use.
 - **Refrigeration Storage Bins**
 - The second Evidence Storage Room contains the Evidence Refrigerator – in which are two individually secured storage bins. A key is kept in each lock when not in use. When an item of evidence is placed in a bin, the employee will remove the key and maintain custody of the key until the evidence is removed. After use, the key will be placed back in the lock.
 - **Drying Rooms**
 - Individually secured Evidence Drying Rooms are located in the operational area of the section. A key will be kept in each door lock when not in use.

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- When an item of evidence is placed in a drying room, the employee will remove the key and maintain custody of the key until the evidence is removed. The key will then be placed back in the lock for future use.
- A Supervisor will be notified no later than 24 hours when any key is unaccounted for and immediately if the integrity of the evidence is at risk.
- **Long Term (Bulk) Storage**
 - **Evidence Storage Rooms**
 - Two Evidence Storage Rooms (or Vault) are located within the operational area of the section and are utilized for the storage of bulk evidence and evidence pending processing.
 - The refrigerator is located within the second Evidence Storage Room and is utilized for the storage of bulk refrigerated evidence and evidence pending processing.
 - Both evidence storage rooms are secured with punch code combination locks and are locked when the lab is unattended. (ASCLD/LAB 5.8.4.1)
 - Only section personnel are issued the 4-digit security punch code.
 - **South Congress Vehicle Processing Facility Security**
 - Keys for the pedestrian door of the facility are attached to each vehicle key ring or are accessible to approved personnel. The vehicle key rings are stored within the secured Crime Scene Squad Room when not in use.
 - Approved personnel are issued a personal 4-digit security code to activate and de-activate the alarm system. This code will not be disclosed to anyone.
 - Once entry into the facility is made, a 60 second delay of the alarm is given to allow deactivation of the system by entering the four digit code on the keypad.
 - In the event the code is not entered in a 60 second period, the system will activate and the security company will be notified immediately of the alarm.
 - The company will call the facility and request the password, which has been provided to each employee. The correct password will terminate the alarm.
 - An incorrect password will initiate a police response to the facility.
 - Prior to exiting the facility, the system must be rearmed by entering the four digit personal code.
 - The doors will be secured and the security system activated when unoccupied.
 - In the event that the personal code is forgotten, approved personnel may contact a Crime Scene Supervisor to obtain their personal code.
 - The Assistant Manager receives a monthly printout establishing each time the system is armed and disarmed. This printout will be maintained by the Crime Scene Supervisors.

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- Anyone not issued a personal security code will be accompanied by approved staff and use the visitor log (FSD-10) when accessing the facility.

➤ **Springdale Vehicle Processing Facility**

- Access to the processing bay of the facility is via card access. Card access to the facility is approved by the Laboratory Director.
- Anyone not issued card access will be accompanied by approved staff and will utilize the visitor log (FSD-10) when accessing the facility.

3 QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.1 Proficiency Testing

- **Frequency of Testing**

- Each Crime Scene Section analyst will participate in and successfully complete an internal proficiency test during the first quarter of every calendar year, unless the analysts is unavailable during that time period. The analyst will be administered the internal proficiency test upon return to duty. (ASCLD/LAB 5.9.3.4).
- The proficiency test will be constructed by the Technical Leader and will consist of the applicable instructions, description of its preparation with any items and the expected outcomes.
- The proficiency tests will be constructed from the various duties required for crime scene investigations, to include the complete processing of one mock crime scene a minimum of every five years (ASCLD/LAB 5.9.3.3).
- The proficiency test and applicable instructions will be forwarded to the supervisor(s) or designee who will:
 - a) Enter the test information in LIMS, initiate the Proficiency Review Form (FSD 002), and request the Quality Assurance Manager to lock the LIMS cases prior to conducting the test.
 - b) Schedule the proficiency tests and evaluate the employee performance as the test is conducted.
 - c) Return the completed test and all paperwork for each employee to the Technical Reviewer
- The Technical Reviewer will evaluate each test with the supervisor or evaluator to determine if and what level any nonconformancies were detected.
- The Technical Reviewer with the supervisor will determine what actions, such as remedial training, removal from casework, etc., will be required for any nonconformities.
- The analyst will be informed of the results and sign the Proficiency Review Form.

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- The Proficiency Review Form will be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Manager after they have been completed.
- The Proficiency Review Forms will be maintained by the supervisor.

3.2 Court Testimony Monitoring

No Supplemental Requirements

3.3 Case Review

- **Case Review**

- Upon completion, all reports will be checked for correctness before being routed to the appropriate supervisor or designated personnel for review. The author's signature will indicate that the report contains the necessary elements of a professional report and that it complies with the reporting guidelines as outlined in this manual.
- Property crime reports should be completed after each call and will be routed by the end of shift.
- Major crime reports should be completed within 72 hours after completing the call (e.g., all processing has been conducted and the evidence has been submitted).
- Report(s) may be suspended for a specified time with supervisor approval, (e.g., late calls, workload, etc.) however; the approving supervisor and the reason for delay will be documented in the case record.
- The reviewer may route the report back to the author for corrections or approve the report for dissemination.
- Rerouted reports will be returned with a "CR" routing code indicating that the report has been corrected and is ready for another review.
- If the report is returned for corrections, the author must ensure that each revision of their original report and/or note worksheets is retained in the case record. The revisions may be saved to the case record by the supervisor returning the report.
- Rerouted reports that do not require corrections may be returned with an "I" as the routing code.
- Crime Scene employees will monitor their LIMS Assignment queues on a daily basis for any returned reports and/or other pending assignments.

3.4 Laboratory Audits

No Supplemental Requirements

3.5 Validation

No Supplemental Requirements

3.6 Instruments and Equipment

No Supplemental Requirements

3.7 Reagents

- All reagents used for examination results are verified to ensure quality prior to use on evidence.
- All control procedures are outlined in the Crime Scene Technical Manual.

3.8 Document Management

No Supplemental Requirements

3.9 Deviation from Documented Procedures

No Supplemental Requirements

3.10 Quality Issues

No Supplemental Requirements

3.11 Suggestions/Complaints

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3.12 Customer Survey

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3.13 Reference Standards/Material

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3.14 Reference Collections and Databases

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3.15 Examination Verification

No Supplemental Requirements

3.16 Contamination Detection and Prevention

No Supplemental Requirements

4 LABORATORY RECORDS

4.1 Case Records

- The arrival date and time at a crime scene or the date and time the analysis began in the laboratory will be documented in the analyst's case notes and will be considered the *start date* of examination.

4.2 Laboratory Reports

- **Reporting Guidelines**

- All personnel are responsible for maintaining accurate and thorough notes during crime scene investigations and the processing of evidence.
- Employees will ensure that their notes taken while investigating an incident will corroborate all information included in their report.
- Notes and reports should include the following information, when applicable:
 - Unique Identifiers – LIMS number and author information on every page
 - Offense number and any associated offense numbers
 - Type of offense
 - Date(s) and times – of arrival and departure, including secondary scenes (the dispatched time is optional)
 - Date and time (or ranges) – of occurrence
 - Date(s) of evidence processing – in the CS Laboratory
 - Location of scene – exact address with building or business name
 - Person(s) contacted – involvement, title/position, etc.
 - CS personnel on scene – field trainer, for assistance, etc.
 - Other personnel on scene – information/direction/consent received, etc.
 - Brief description of sequence of events related to the offense
 - Description/condition of scene – single family, duplex, second floor apartment, backyard, neat, ransacked, vacant, cluttered, etc.
 - Signs of struggle – furniture/items out of place, damage to property, etc.
 - Description/condition of victim(s)/suspect(s) – clothing, injuries, position, etc.
 - Point of entry/exit – if determined, other aborted points of entry, same, etc.

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- Method of entry – if determined, type of force or tool used, left unlocked, key used, allowed in, hid inside, etc.
 - Type of items stolen/handled – large, small, specific in nature, luggage, pillow case, personal in nature, sexual in nature, etc.
 - Targeted items stolen – in more general terms, e.g., “large screen television/ gaming systems from living room”, “power/hand tools from garage”, etc.
 - Individual stolen item information may be included in the LIMS analysis report; however, that information must be forwarded to Austin PD Central Records via email or interoffice mail.
 - Received itemized lists of stolen property (prepared by the victim) are not evidence and must be forwarded to Austin PD Central Records via email or interoffice mail. The information may be scanned into the case record.
 - Suspect(s) actions – ate, used bathroom, used tools from scene, left items at scene (foreign to victim), disabled alarm/lights, vandalized, etc.
 - Evidence located – exact location, time, by whom, if processed on scene, etc.
 - Evidence documented – photographed, videotaped, sketched, etc.
 - Evidence collected – full descriptions, identification numbers, etc.
 - Weather conditions – if pertinent, scene and or evidence affected, etc.
 - Condition of item received – properly sealed, no defects in packaging, etc.
 - Processing conducted – methods, controls, substrate type, location where evidence developed, results after each method employed, etc.
 - Disposition of evidence – dried, stored, submitted, downloaded, etc.
 - Signature of person completing report.
 - Specific observations noted at the scene, to include:
 - The presence of blood will not be reported unless it can be adequately substantiated, e.g. it is observed free flowing from a wound.
 - The phrase “presence of possible blood” may be reported only when a successful presumptive test is conducted.
 - If no presumptive test is performed, the report will be descriptive in nature, e.g., reddish brown stain, bodily fluid, etc.
- Reports should not include the following:
- Speculation or unfounded opinions
 - Conclusions not based on facts/physical evidence
 - Information outside area of expertise
 - Internal issues that should be addressed in a memorandum format
 - Information of which the reporter does not have direct knowledge

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- Employees will enter notes and reports into the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) and evidence will be entered into Versadex with an Austin PD offense number.
- **Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)**
 - Crime Scene Section personnel will utilize the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to document all assignments and analyses conducted. Versadex will be utilized for initial evidence documentation and submittal. The guidelines that follow have been specifically established for the Crime Scene Section.
 - Crime Scene (Field) Assignment
 - Reports will be generated as a “Crime Scene assignment” and any items collected will be “linked” to the report through Versadex.
 - a) Open the **Find Case** tab at the bottom of the main screen and determine whether a report has already been started for the Department case number assigned.
 - Department case numbers will be searched using the full year, a hyphen with no spaces before or after, and the assigned number without any preceding zeros (i.e., 10 – 0010123 must be entered as 2010-10123).
 - b) If no initial case is found, the **New Lab Case** tab should be selected at the bottom of the main screen and then manual submission selected for a new lab case.
 - c) Complete the appropriate fields to generate a new case.
 - d) Once the information has been entered, click **Quick Create** and locate the new case by searching under **Find Case** or by choosing the **Recent** tab under Find Case.
 - If evidence items need to be linked to the case, then a new “Submission” needs to be completed. (Refer to Evidence Submittal section below.)
 - In order to complete a report, a “CS Assignment” must be initiated. The assignment must be initiated as soon as possible after completing the call for service.
 - a) To initiate a new assignment, select **Add** and complete the following information:
 - Section – enter CS
 - Analyst – enter employee number
 - Status – enter “1” (assign to analyst)

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- Check **File** box on right or check corresponding evidence item boxes
- b) This new assignment information will be transferred to the report and a report may now be completed.
- c) Remaining in the Assignments tab, select **Report** (on the right side of the screen) in order to enter the “matrix”. The information completed in the matrix will be used to populate the report.
- d) All applicable fields should be completed in the **Crime Scene Investigation Information** tab within the matrix.
- e) In the **Crime Scene Item Description** panel, all items in the “Item description” field should be double clicked for generation into the final report.
- f) A **Lab Processing** panel can be added by selecting **Add** (under Analysis at the bottom of the screen) for lab processing that has been completed.
- g) All worksheets that need to be completed will be located under the **General Worksheet** tab.
 - Worksheets must be selected to document all mandatory analyses information, including – controls conducted, substrates processed and processes used.
- h) Stand-alone documents (sketches, receipts, etc.) may be added to the report by scanning and then attaching to the same assignment.
 - The scan function may be entered by pressing **F11** on the keyboard.
 - All documents should display identifying information, including the unique identifier (LIMS and Item number).
- Once the matrix entries are completed, the **Send to Word** box should be selected in order to generate the report as a word document.
 - a) Changes to the word document can be made and saved, but the report must be opened **As Is** in the future to prevent manual corrections from being lost.
- After the report and worksheets have been completed, the report must be “signed” and “routed” to a supervisor or designee for approval.
 - a) The report is signed by selecting the **Sign** box and entering the author’s personal password. The author’s signature will then be attached to the report.
 - b) The report is then routed to a supervisor or designee for technical and/or administrative review.

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- Select **Routing** on the Assignments tab.
- Enter the supervisor or designee's employee number.
- Choose technical or administrative review.
- Enter comments if applicable.
- The report must be administratively reviewed and approved before it can be released. (See 3.3 Case Review)
- Evidence Submittal
 - Most evidence items will be entered into Versadex. If evidence items need to be linked to the case, then a new "Submission" needs to be completed.
 - a) If initiating the case, as the case creator, a Submission will already exist.
 - b) If not, a Submission must be created by locating the **Submissions** tab and selecting **Add**.
 - Under the Submissions tab, evidence items that have been entered into Versadex can be linked into LIMS for the purpose of processing or report writing.
 - a) Highlight the correct submission (in blue) before linking.
 - b) Select the **Link** box to enter name and password for Versadex verification.
 - c) A new panel will appear listing all the items in Versadex for the case that have yet to be linked.
 - d) Select the desired evidence items by checking the corresponding box and then click **Create Items**.
 - The item description for every evidence item must include the actual date and time the item was collected and by whom.
 - a) Select **Items Tab** and highlight the evidence item for which the information is to be added.
 - b) Click the **Edit** box and under "described as" (after the item description) enter the actual date and time collected and the collector's initials (i.e. Hanes, t-shirt, XL, red; collected on 06/01/07 at 1200 hrs by KF3909).
 - c) Each item must be updated in this way.
 - Custody of items must be taken by the analyst in one of two ways:
 - a) Scanning analyst's personal bar code and then Versadex tag.
 - Location is always scanned prior to Versadex tag; or
 - b) Utilizing the **Evidence Transfer** box under the Items tab.

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- Place “**AN**” followed by employee number in the dedicated fields or by using the help (?) drop down list.
 - Evidence can then be transferred to another location within the Crime Scene Lab in a like manner.
- Lab Case (CSL) Assignment
 - Non-field assignments will also be worked by Crime Scene personnel. Requests for lab analysis (Prelogs) of evidence items may be submitted by police and prosecutors.
- **Lab Assignments**
 - The Crime Scene Section will receive requests for evidence processing through the LIMS “Prelog” only.
 - The Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist or designee will sort Crime Scene Lab (CSL) requests in the LIMS system using the following status codes:
 - **0** – “Assigned to Section” – new requests
 - **1**– “Assigned to Analyst” – requests that have been assigned to an analyst
 - **B** – “Ballistics Analysis Pending” – items that are being stored in the Ballistics section
 - **C** – “Chemistry Analysis Pending” – items that will need to go to Chem lab for analysis/drug separation prior to being submitted to the crime scene lab
 - **D** – “DNA Analysis Pending” - items that will need to go to DNA for analysis prior to being submitted to the crime scene lab
 - **E** – “Ready for Examination” – items that have been received by the crime scene lab and are in the crime scene lab evidence vault awaiting analysis.
 - A CSL assignment involving evidence that was originally collected by a Crime Scene Section employee may be placed in that person’s queue.
 - Requesting Evidence for Laboratory Processing
 - Evidence not currently in the Crime Scene Lab Evidence Vault should be requested from the evidence room, or from other forensic sections within the Division, by the Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist.
 - An employee assigned to the lab or designee may request those items when the Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist is unavailable.
 - The Crime Scene employee assigned to a CSL assignment may coordinate with other forensic sections for evidence transfers.
 - Receiving Evidence for Laboratory Processing

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- The Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist or designee will receive requested evidence from the evidence room and other forensic sections.
- The Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist or designee will transfer the items to the Crime Scene Lab Evidence Vault.
- The Crime Scene employee may be notified via an email that evidence assigned to them is being stored in the Crime Scene Lab Evidence Vault.
 - A “Requested by (employee name)” notification may be placed on the exterior of the evidence packaging in the evidence vault.
- Upon removing the evidence from the Crime Scene Lab Evidence Vault, the Crime Scene Section employee will:
 - Immediately assign themselves to the existing LIMS CSL assignment (**a new CSL assignment must not be created**);
 - Take custody of the evidence utilizing the LIMS system and mark the evidence for identification.
- Processing Evidence
 - Refer to the Physical Evidence Processing Guide chapter in the Crime Scene Technical manual.
- Submitting Lab Processed Evidence
 - All non-ballistics related evidence should be submitted to the Evidence Section via the Central Evidence Lockers (CEL):
 - The custody will be transferred to the CEL in LIMS.
 - Requested Ballistics evidence (with an open Firearms Assignment) will be submitted to the Ballistics Section by one of two methods:
 - Crime Scene employees will transfer the item(s) to Ballistics Section personnel directly via LIMS; or
 - CS employees will transfer the item(s) in LIMS to the CS Lab Evidence Vault with a “Please submit to Ballistics” notification on the exterior of the package before placing the evidence into the Evidence Vault. The Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist or designee will then take custody of the items via LIMS before transferring them to the Ballistics Section.
 - All **non-requested** Ballistics related evidence should be submitted to the Evidence Section via the CEL.
 - The custody will be tracked electronically in LIMS.
 - Occasionally, evidence will need to be transferred to other forensic sections. These custody transactions will be documented in the case record.

4.3 Release of Records Information

No Supplemental Requirements

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4.3.1 Release of Information

No Supplemental Requirements

4.3.2 Release of Information to the News Media

No Supplemental Requirements

4.3.3 Open Records Request

No Supplemental Requirements

4.3.4 Discovery Orders

No Supplemental Requirements

4.3.5 Requests for Reports

No Supplemental Requirements

4.4 Removal of Records for Court

No Supplemental Requirements

4.5 Archiving Laboratory Case Files

No Supplemental Requirements

4.6 Expunctions

No Supplemental Requirements

4.7 Control of Laboratory Records

No Supplemental Requirements

5 EVIDENCE PROCEDURES

5.1 General Practices

Practice

Evidence is routinely brought in from the field by the analyst. This evidence may be processed by the analyst and then released to the Evidence Control Section for submittal. Any deleterious change to an item of evidence must be reported to a supervisor as soon as possible.

- **Evidence Receipt**

No Supplemental Requirements

- **Evidence Storage**

- Crime scene evidence will be stored in one of the locations identified as in-process or bulk storage locations (See 2.2 Security).
- Occasionally, oversized or unusual items of evidence must be collected. A Crime Scene Supervisor may be notified to determine an alternative storage location.
- Every evidence item, to be temporarily stored in the identified locations, must be accompanied by a completed chain of custody before being secured.
- There are occasions when other Forensic sections will have to utilize the Crime Scene Laboratory drying rooms:
 - Other sections do not have access to this area and will be escorted into the lab and allowed to place their evidence in a drying room.
 - That section's employee will follow the Technical Manual with regards to evidence storage and will maintain the key to that drying room.
 - Once the evidence is dry, the responsible employee will remove the evidence and return the key to the door lock.
 - Crime Scene personnel will be responsible for ensuring that the drying room is cleaned and decontaminated.

- **Evidence Handling**

- When possible, evidence items that are collected in the field will adhere to the following requirements before transport to the lab:
 - Evidence must be properly packaged to ensure all open ends are secured to prevent loss, cross transfer, contamination and/or deleterious change.

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- The exterior of the packaging must be labeled to ensure identification. If only one case is being transported, this information should include an item number/label, a brief description of the item, time of collection, and exact location of collection.
 - If multiple cases are being transported, the Versadex offense number or LIMS number (if known) should also be included on each package.
- **Evidence Screening and Examination**
 - When possible, evidence will be examined using the least destructive method (visual) prior to progressing to more destructive methods (chemical application).
 - Evidence will be examined for a complete description and proper documentation for possible future identification and or comparison purposes.
- **Evidence Security**
 - Evidence will be secured in an in-process storage location and the key will be maintained by the employee responsible for that evidence.
 - Personnel will not have access to evidence secured by another employee within the in-process locations.
- **Request for Service**
 - Requests for Crime Scene field response should be directed through Austin PD Communications. Direct paging of employees should be limited to those requiring an urgent response.
 - Crime Scene Supervisors may be contacted for scheduling a field response in advance of the event.
 - Assisting Other Agencies:
 - The Crime Scene Section will assist other agencies with forensic support at crime scenes under the following guidelines:
 - An initial report must be generated through the Austin Police Department prior to Crime Scene Section response. The title code "Assist Other Agency" should be used.
 - The following guidelines will be followed:
 - The Crime Scene Section will not work crime scenes for an outside agency without approval of the Supervisor and or Assistant Manager.
 - This approval should be in advance, may be verbal, and will be made based on the seriousness of the crime, personnel, and resource limitations.

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- The exceptions to these guidelines are:
 - If the outside agency request is made by an Austin Police Department investigator who is also assisting with the investigation or the crime scene is directly related to an Austin Police Department case.

- **Austin PD Evidence Transfer for Analysis**

No Supplemental Requirements

- **Transfer of Evidence Between Sections**

No Supplemental Requirements

- **Outside Agency Submissions**

No Supplemental Requirements

- **Release of Evidence to Other Agencies, Courts, and Outside Laboratories**

- **Evidence Submission to Other Agencies**

- Because the Austin Police Department does not maintain a full service laboratory, evidence is released to other outside laboratories for analysis – such as entomological evidence.

- **General Release Procedures**

- Once it is determined that evidence will be released to another laboratory for analysis, the evidence will be properly packaged for transport.
- Evidence can be forwarded to another laboratory in person or via mail depending on the policies of the receiving laboratory.
- The release of evidence to another laboratory will be documented in LIMS and supplemental reports. Copies of all submission forms, mail documentation, etc. will be scanned into the case record.

- **Department of Public Safety (DPS)**

- The appropriate submission form will be completed and the evidence will be transported to the DPS laboratory in person.

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➤ **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**

- The appropriate submission documentation will be completed and the evidence will be packaged appropriately and mailed, return receipt requested.

➤ **Other Laboratories**

- The submission method as prescribed by the receiving laboratory will be followed.

5.2 Observation by Outside Experts

No Supplemental Requirements

5.3 Evidence Disposal

No Supplemental Requirements

5.4 Destruction of Hazardous Substances

No Supplemental Requirements

5.5 Outsourcing

No Supplemental Requirements

6 SAFETY

Practice

All safety protocols and laboratory practices should be followed as outlined in the Forensic Science Division Safety Manual. In addition, the following safety practices should be adhered to by Crime Scene personnel:

- **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Always observe universal precautions. Assume that any potentially infectious materials, such as blood or other body fluids, are infected.
- Always use personal protective equipment (PPE) as warranted and or required.
 - Stay aware of the condition of the PPE while wearing it.

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- Change to new equipment as it becomes contaminated (e.g., between collections of DNA related items, touching of face, pieces become punctured or ripped, wetted with chemicals, etc.)
- Confine used, contaminated PPE in approved protective containers and keep an adequate supply of new PPE for replacement at all times.
- Report and replace malfunctioning PPE and ensure that non-disposable equipment is properly cleaned and stored after each use.
- Follow all guidelines for the use of PPE, such as type of gloves and respirators to be used, in any given environment or circumstance.
- Confine contamination whenever possible by placing contaminated materials and sharps into proper containers or with proper warning label.
- Contaminated material from crime scenes will be transported to the Crime Scene Laboratory for proper disposal. Routine landfill trash disposal is not permitted.
- **Field Safety**
 - Crime scene (CS) personnel should be aware of their surroundings and approximate location at all times, especially while processing in unoccupied structures and isolated areas.
 - Austin Police Department Communications should always be aware of CS personnel locations and be notified of any change in location (e.g., to back latent cards, write reports, etc.), if unit GPS is not available.
 - Crime Scene personnel will request the presence of police when the crime scene or their personal security should come into question.
 - Pepper spray will be carried by Crime Scene personnel, unless excused, during field duty and will only be used as a defensive measure regarding an evident threat to personal safety. Any use of pepper spray will be reported immediately to both police and a Crime Scene Supervisor.
 - Reflective vests must be worn at all crash scenes, especially near active vehicular traffic and or during the hours of darkness.
 - Supervisor approval should be obtained when items suspected of being infested with insects (e.g., fleas, scabies, bed bugs, etc.) are requested to be collected.
- **Vehicle Processing Facilities**
 - The facility is equipped with a ventilation system, which will be used when processing with chemicals, or when gas fumes and vapors are present from an evidence vehicle.

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- The facility is equipped with a hydraulic inspection lift used for undercarriage inspection of vehicles. Caution should be used when working around this equipment and only contracted wrecker personnel will operate the lift.

- **Crime Scene Laboratory Safety**

- All standard laboratory practices should be followed as outlined in the Forensic Science Division Safety Manual.
- The analyst will follow safe work practices which include the proper use of:
 - PPE (e.g., gloves, masks, laboratory coats and eye protection)
 - Engineering controls (e.g., fume hoods, eye wash stations)
 - Hygiene practices (e.g., washing hands, refraining from food or drink)
- In the majority of cases, gloves worn as PPE in the laboratory are intended to protect the hands from incidental contact or small splashes. In these cases, good quality disposable nitrile gloves will usually suffice. However, nitrile is not suitable for direct contact with ketones (acetone), benzene, oxidizing acids, organic compounds containing nitrogen, aniline, phenol, chloroform, or ethyl acetate, amongst others.
 - Gloves worn as PPE for intentional contact or as protection against large splashes with hazardous chemicals should be of the thicker re-usable type, but will be subject to the same chemical limitations.
 - Double glove application (i.e. one nitrile with one latex) is appropriate when using acetone based reagents.
 - None of the gloves provided for field and or lab use is designed for immersion. Appropriate gloves for this task will be Butyl rubber and or a neoprene based product.
- The analyst assumes the responsibility of obtaining the necessary knowledge concerning each chemical used, the hazard(s) it may pose and the procedures and work practices necessary to prevent unhealthful exposure. This information is available from the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and the labels affixed to the chemicals.
- Caution will be exercised in the use of lasers, alternate light sources and ultra-violet lamps whether inside or outside the Crime Scene Laboratory, to include:
 - Proper eye protection will be utilized at all times during operation.
 - Skin exposure will be kept to a minimum during operation.
 - The use of any forensic light source should be conducted in the Alternate Light Source (ALS) room located in the Crime Scene Laboratory.
 - The ALS Room door should be kept closed at all times during operation.

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- A caution sign should be placed on or near the ALS Room door to alert other employees that a laser or other forensic light source may be in use.
- If a forensic light source (including a hand held UV light) is used in the field, ensure that anyone in the immediate area is wearing the appropriate eyewear or is outside the minimum safety distance. Ensure that anyone else in the vicinity is aware that the light source is in use.
- **Hazardous Waste**
 - Hazardous waste will not be poured down the drain, but will be placed in the properly labeled hazardous waste containers located in the ventilation hood(s) of the Crime Scene Laboratory. Proper disposal will be coordinated with the Forensic Chemistry Laboratory.
- **Transport and Storage of Chemicals**
 - Formulations of chemicals for use in the facility should be prepared in the Crime Scene Laboratory before transport, unless the procedure indicates otherwise.
 - Most of the chemical mixtures used in crime scene processing contain flammable solvents such as acetone, ethanol and methanol. These mixtures or components for mixture should be transported in rugged non-breakable containers or in plastic coated glass containers and in a safe manner.
 - Primary and secondary containers must be legibly marked with the contents.
 - Suspected dangerous substances – such as Ether, should never be handled or carried in a Crime Scene vehicle. The bomb disposal unit will be notified.
- **Mechanical Hazards**
 - All power tools or mechanical equipment should be inspected prior to use for bad connections and loose or damaged parts. All appropriate protective equipment should be employed or worn – including eyewear.

7 PERSONNEL

7.1 Documents

No Supplemental Requirements

7.2 Subpoenas

No Supplemental Requirements

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7.3 Discussion of Cases

No Supplemental Requirements

7.4 Private Case Consultations

No Supplemental Requirements

7.5 Testimony for Previous Employers

No Supplemental Requirements

7.6 Vehicles

- The Crime Scene Section is assigned vehicles to conduct business. The vehicles enable the crime scene employees to respond to crime scenes and support investigations. The vehicles are not intended to be used for the transport of found property or for safekeeping purposes.

7.7 Major Event Protocol

No Supplemental Requirements

7.8 Attendance

- **Leave**
 - If there are numerous requests for the same holiday(s), several factors will be taken into consideration, including but not limited to the time the leave request was submitted and number of previous holidays taken off. Requests for holiday leave will be submitted no earlier than 30 days prior to the holiday, unless required for airline and/or hotel reservations. Travel arrangements should not be made until the time off has been approved.

7.9 Certification of Analysts

No Supplemental Requirements

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7.10 Employee Training Program

No Supplemental Requirements

7.11 Employee Approval for Casework

No Supplemental Requirements

7.12 Employee Career Development

No Supplemental Requirements

7.13 Continuing Education

No Supplemental Requirements

7.14 Internship Program

No Supplemental Requirements

7.15 Volunteer Program

No Supplemental Requirements

7.16 Rider Program

No Supplemental Requirements

8 COMPUTER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

No Supplemental Requirements